

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 00835 161547Z

63

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

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R 161530Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7910

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 835

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CZ

SUBJECT: CURRENT PRAGUE REPORTS AND RUMORS

1. FOLLOWING ARE SEVERAL REPORTS AND RUMORS HEARD RECENTLY:

2. AMERICAN AUTHOR PHILIP ROTH HAS PAID HIS FOURTH ANNUAL VISIT TO PRAGUE AND SAW HIS FRIENDS, THE DISSIDENT AUTHORS KUNDERA, VACULIK, KLIMA AND OTHERS. ROTH CALLED AT THE EMBASSY TOWARDS THE END OF HIS VISIT AND REPORTED THAT THE CZECH PLAYWRIGHT HAVEL HAD VERY RECENTLY SENT A LETTER 30 TO 40 PAGES LONG TO HUSAK CONDEMNING THE REGIME'S TREATMENT OF INTELLECTUALS. ROTH'S CONTACTS HAD SEEN THE LETTER AND WERE IMPRESSED AT ITS VIGOR AND FORTHRIGHTNESS.

3. CHARGE ASKED ROTH IF HIS FRIENDS HAD ANYTHING TO SUBSTANTIATE RECURRENT RUMORS OF SOME KIND OF LIBERALIZATION MEASURES. ROTH SAID HIS FRIENDS HAD HEARD THE SAME RUMORS, AND TENDED TO CLING TO THEM FOR HOPE, SINCE THEIR OWN POSITION WAS SO HOPELESS. HE HIMSELF HAD HEARD NOTHING FROM ANY OF THEM TO SUBSTANTIATE THESE HOPES, THEREFORE HE FEARED THAT RUMORS WERE MERELY LAST GASPS OF DESPERATION SOME CLUNG TO RUMORS, OTHERS WROTE DEFIANT LETTERS AS LAST GESTURE. ALAS, WE TEND TO AGREE WITH THIS ASSESSMENT.

4. WITH REGARD TO DUBECK'S LETTER OF LAST OCTOBER 28, VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 00835 161547Z

LITTLE IS KNOWN HERE IN PRAGUE. BRITISH EMBASSY HAS HEARD

RECENT STORIES WHICH RECOUNT HOW EVERYONE IN BRATISLAVA TAKES CARE OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION (WHERE DUBCEK WORKS), TO MAKE SURE HE IS PROTECTED -- THUS DELIVERIES OF GOODS ARE SENT AHEAD OF TIME INSTEAD OF LATE, SUPPLIES ARE ALWAYS FORTHCOMING, ETC. WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING TO SUBSTANTIATE REPORTS THAT DUBCEK HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO PRAGUE. MOST OBSERVERS HERE BELIEVE THAT DUBCEK HAS NOT CHANGED ANY OF HIS OPINIONS, BUT THAT HE PLAYS NO PRESENT ROLE, EXCEPT AS A SYMBOL WHICH IS MOST LIKELY TO BE USED BY THE EMIGRES.

5. FINALLY, ANNOUNCEMENT HAS FINALLY BEEN MADE OF MAJOR PARADES IN PRAGUE AND BRATISLAVA ON MAY 9. GERMAN EMBASSY REPORTS RUMORS THAT SVOBODA WILL BE SHOWN AT PRAGUE PARADE. GERMANS ALSO STILL FEEL BREZHNEV MAY YET PAY VISIT TO PRAGUE, PERHAPS ON MAY 5 TO CELEBRATE PRAGUE UPRISING. FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE PRO OR CON ON THIS RUMOR, BUT WE HAVE HEARD SAME REPORT FROM YUGOSLAV DCM.
PERRY

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